

THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH BY NURTURE AND BY CONQUEST

INTRODUCTION

Let us give consideration this afternoon to some of the methods by which the Kingdom of Christ makes progress in the world and study them as they apply to China and particularly in their bearings on mission work in our South China field. To many present the subject is a threadbare one, and anything I can say is already familiar. Let such remember that there is always necessity for the younger missionaries to study for themselves the methods of missionary work they find in vogue, and test their efficiency in practical work. Moreover there is urgent need for all of us to restudy the whole missionary programme in the light of the new conditions that are springing up with bewildering rapidity from day to day.

The political revolution is in progress. The old order of government has been thrown down; the new is taking shape and struggling to assert its authority. The people are learning some hard economic facts. They find themselves almost in the elemental condition of a community without government. The restraining hand of the conqueror has been removed and for the time being many are a law unto themselves, with consequent conflict of passion and condition. Out of the chaos we may expect that the people will in due time arise with a strong conviction as to the absolute need of government, and, I trust, with a deep sense of responsible citizenship.

The political revolution is in progress, but we know from history that the revolution will not rest with the political. It must affect every sphere of thought and activity throughout the empire. Already we see signs that critical attention is being turned to things social, moral, intellectual and religious, while hoary custom and national usage are being ruthlessly cast into the melting pot.

So far the missionaries have been lookers on, albeit most interested spectators, and some have occupied, rather uncomfortable front seats; but the time is coming when we shall find ourselves in the arena, in the midst of a crisis; more important and more vital, the struggle of a free people, under new political conditions, with the problems that relate to their being, to their spiritual nature and destiny, and to the forces of good and evil which wage war in their hearts and in the midst of the nation.

In this struggle there will be a new temper, which we must recognise, and new conditions, which we must prepare ourselves to meet. It will be ours to continue to hold up the standard for the living God and to point the people to Him upon Whom alone they can establish the nation in righteousness and in truth.

If the issue is what we hope for, entire freedom for Christianity, and a large turning to the Gospel as the true religion, then there will be opportunities enough to tax all the resources of the Church. It is important, therefore that we give time to study what things are most essential and use such methods as will give largest returns in the extension of the Kingdom of God.

The Growth of the Church

1. BY CONQUEST

In new territory the Growth of the Church in its initial stages is necessarily by conquest. It invades a field occupied by other faiths and comes among a people owning allegiance to other gods. It enters upon a programme of conquest, its weapon the Word of God; its method, the preaching of the Gospel; its great ally, the Holy Spirit.

Even in lands long under the sway of the Gospel, the method of conquest is never neglected by the live church. Forward movements, evangelistic campaigns, mission services, all aim at bringing to the allegiance of Christ those outside His Kingdom. It has been the glory of the church in its warfare against sin that it is essentially militant in spirit, ever seeking to bring all men into subjection to Christ and never hesitating to carry its message into all quarters. In the homelands there are never wanting those who rejoice in any opportunity of doing battle for the Lord

in dens and public houses, highways and racecourses, in the very strongholds and fastnesses of the enemy, fulfilling the great programme of the Gospel in proclaiming release to the captives and setting at liberty them that are bruised.

But it has been in her foreign enterprises that the Church has shown her greatest thirst for conquest, her highest daring and enterprise. In these days when we march in companies and squadrons, when the tick of the telegraph keeps us in constant touch with the homelands, we can only marvel at the daring faith of the Church, or rather of the men in the Church, who could throw its battle line right out into the farthest quarters of the globe and send a Xavier, a Carey, and a Morrison single-handed to conquer nations for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Centuries have passed and still the battle continues unceasing. The fight is against great odds; the gain is slow and hard won; some say even yet that we are out on a forlorn hope. With time some are influenced, a few range themselves under the banner of the invader. In China, the Gospel, in over a hundred years warfare, has been proclaimed in nearly every town and market throughout the land. What are the results? Statistics record about a quarter of a million converts in the various churches, a proportion of one out of every sixteen hundred of the population. There are also those who have passed away in the faith to be taken into account. What we note with most satisfaction is that converts are coming in steadily increasing members.

Spite of our gains, however, the task still ahead is a stupendous one, and were it not for factors in operation, other than those of conquest by the invading army, the prospect of the termination of the war and the surrender of the whole nation to Christ, would be very remote. But there is another factor, and that a most potent one, in this warfare of the Gospel. The conquered themselves become recruits under the banner of Christ; those who have surrendered to Him become factors in the further conquest of their own people. From the baptism of the first Chinese the missionary forces have been more or less augmented by the efforts of the Chinese converts. At first, the mission-

aries were the great human factor in the prosecution of the work. Now, the ranks are being filled by the Chinese Christians, and in the future the progress of the battle will more and more depend upon them.

2. BY NURTURE

In India the native army far outnumbers the British troops engaged in the maintenance of the Indian Empire. That army has been enlisted, drilled and inspired by the British officers, who have called it into existence. In China, as a result of the labours of the missionaries there has been called forth a native church which should now become the great factor in the evangelisation of the country. We are told that no nation has ever been completely evangelised except by its own people and that Asia will be Christianised by Asiatics. If that is so, it is the duty of the missionaries not only to call forth the members into the Church, it is theirs also to instruct and spiritually equip them so that they shall be fitted to carry out their high task with some promise of success. As a converted heathen said, "The axe is a very little weapon but it is applied to the thickest trees. Christians are the brandished axe, their number is small, but they will bring the great tree of heathenism to the ground."

Even more than numbers, quality is essential. Very much indeed depends upon the quality and keenness of the axe. Of the 250,000 Christians how many are Christ-like, Spirit-filled men and women who will count in the winning of China for Christ? I am afraid many of us will think with misgiving of the proportion on whom we could reckon. Zinzendorf warned his missionaries not to measure converts with the Moravian yard stick. There are here and there in the Church of Christ in China, men and women who would measure well by any Christian yard stick, but in regard to the great majority, we have to confess that there is a great intensive work to be done, before they become effective in breaking down the forces of heathenism. The actual strength of the Church is to be measured not merely by numbers but by the spirituality of its members. Scripture puts the spiritual equipment first. Faith, love and purity within the Church, the power

of the Spirit in the hearts of the members, zeal for Christ and love for souls are the conditions of successful witness-ing. A Paul, a Moody, a Hudson Taylor, counts as a host in the Kingdom of Christ. The Moravian Church with its faith and self-sacrifice puts to shame the missionary records of far larger communions.

The church may grow in numbers by the winning of new converts; its power may be mightily increased by the development of the spiritual life of its members. There are great possibilities of growth, growth in grace and in the knowledge of Christ "continued unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." It is the possibilities of this growth by nurture, that I wish to emphasise in this paper. We shall consider it under three aspects, (a) The individual convert, (b) His children, and (c) His home.

a. THE INDIVIDUAL CONVERT

Let us study briefly the position of the average Chinese convert to see if we can arrive at a more just estimate of his position in regard to the spiritual life. He is a good deal of a perplexity to the missionary pastor; satisfactory in the emphasis with which he prides himself on his attachment to the worship of the true God, and in his contempt for the idols and superstitions he has so recently given up; but most aggravating in his contentment with his present status, and in his indifference to progress in spiritual things. Church membership often seems to be regarded as a through ticket for salvation, and there is no conception of the Christian life as a pilgrimage or a race. Shall we diagnose it as a case of arrested development? Is it temporary or permanent? What is the cause of it? Is it due to want of capacity for any higher religious life, or to the environment in which he is living? Is it due to faults in our mission methods or is it simply that the first generation converted from heathenism belong to an infant stage of Christianity and we must just have patience waiting for a fuller type to develop later on.

From what we hear from candid missionaries in other fields it would seem that this stage of apparently arrested development is a feature of many mission churches. Yet within these churches it is not universal. Nor is it so in South China. Here and there you find a man or woman

whose faith, and zeal and grasp of spiritual things increases steadily from the start. But with the great majority it is not so.

Dr. Warneck in his discussion of this question points out that, in the case of the conversion of a heathen in the East Indies, the step taken is a much greater one, than in the case of a conversion, say, in England. With the latter it is a case of yielding the will to the truth already known, perhaps from childhood. With the former, it is a change to a new heaven and a new earth, an entire revolution in his conceptions of the spiritual and moral world. He leaves behind the immoral or non-moral spirits of animism for the worship of a living, personal, holy God.

In summing up an elaborate analysis of the progress of the average convert from heathenism, Dr. Warneck says,

"The relation of the heathen Christian to God advances by stages. The first stage is the removal of the wall of separation, the cessation of all intercourse with the devilish powers, and the entrance into a childlike, trustful relation with the living God. The second stage is being apprehended by the love of God, a surrender to that love, and in the light of it a knowledge of sin and a longing for forgiveness. The third stage is moral renewal, the maintenance of the good gained through constant warfare against sin. The inviolable laws of growth are that he retrogrades who stands still, who does not strengthen by conflict what he has gained."

A similar general analysis might be made in case of the Cantonese converts, but I am inclined to think we should have to place outward moral reformation second and while the stage of being "apprehended by the love of God, surrender to that love, and in the light of it to the knowledge of sin and longing for forgiveness" would have to be placed later. It has only been in times of revival, such as they had in Manchuria and elsewhere, where the Spirit was working in power, that the Chinese seem to have this intense personal consciousness of sin and of the love of God.

Many converts as far as practical spiritual experience goes, seem to stop at the first stage. "They have turned

from idols to serve the living God," but they have not entered into the wealth of blessing that there is for them in Christ.

In the "Heathen Heart" Mr. Moody points out a similar condition of want of spirituality among Formosan Christians and compares them with the Christians of the Second and Third Centuries. He says that "if we view the Christian writings of that period at their average, we note their fondness of disputing with the heathen the great question of the one true God as against the many false gods, we mark their merely formal references to the death of Christ, with little attempt at explanation or expansion. We observe how they regard the Gospel as a new and improved edition of the Mosaic law, and how, almost from the first, they conceive the Christian life as beginning in baptism and as being maintained by legal observances through which they hope to merit eternal life."

Some of these characteristics are not unknown in the sermons of Cantonese friends and Christians.

Mr. Moody seems inclined to think that part of the difficulty lies with ourselves. We do not realise what a wealth of spiritual inheritance we have entered into with generations of Christianity since our forefathers first emerged from heathenism, and we have not patience with the Chinese for not accomplishing at one stride what has taken Western races centuries to traverse.

It is not that their natures are incapable of receiving Christianity in its fullness, for there are ripe Christian characters amongst the Chinese which are proof of this and an earnest of what will, we trust, be an abundant product of the Chinese church in the days to come. Or take the case of a Chinese child born in America and brought up in a pious Christian home, would that child exhibit the same spiritual capacities as another American child of that home. Surely it would, except that it would have personal characteristics, some of which would be hereditary natural characteristics as is the case with every child.

If the fault of arrested development lies not in spiritual capacity we must look for it elsewhere and I think we find it largely in personal history and environment. In the case of a convert from heathenism we have to deal with an

individual whose whole intellectual, moral and spiritual, conceptions have been moulded in heathenism. We are apt to speak of his conversion as a getting free from bondage; in reality it is a process of trying to get rid of second nature and I am afraid a good bit of it usually goes with him into the church. Just as we are apt to find a good bit of the old Adam in our redeemed nature, so there is a good deal of the heathen heart still clinging to the Chinese convert.

He carries with him into the worship of God many of his old heathen conceptions of worship. Few Chinese know anything of the history or character of the gods they worship. The main question with the heathen is as to which idol is *leng* i.e. exercising spiritual power. Is it any wonder that we find converts with very little concern as to the character of the Deity and His attributes. It is sufficient for them to know that he is the true and living God, and I find it hard to interest them further in the subject.

Again there is no thought in the worship of the idols of having any communion or fellowship with them. Perhaps that is why a devotional meeting does not strongly appeal to them.

Worship of the idols is irregular. A man goes to the temple, or sends along his wife, when he is about to sow or reap, to start on a journey, or about to get a wife for his son. Hence, the convert reasons, what is the use of coming to church every seventh day when you don't need anything special.

Again their prayers to the idols are frankly for material blessings, for healing, good crops, profitable business, wealth and children; the thought of asking for spiritual blessings, for the clean heart, for power to live aright does not therefore come natural to the convert.

Christianity has therefore to contend with the warp and twist given by heathenism and unless there is a large yielding to the transforming influence of the Spirit, growth is slow and almost impossible. The atmosphere of heathenism is apt to be brought with them into the Church. The environment of heathenism still around with its deadening influence and its backward pull is also against them. Often the low standard of life and faith in older church

members is a most serious stumbling-block and a great problem to the missionary.

On the other hand we find ourselves cheered by the persistent way in which they cling to their simple faith in the true God, by their kindness, by the patience with which they listen to our exhortations and by the dim yet trustful way in which they do seem to look in trouble to Christ as their Saviour and helper. What can we do to help these Christians forward so that they will continue to grow and enter into the spiritual inheritance that we know should be theirs. They may do a little to win others from idols, but they are not a great evangelistic strength to the Church. They hinder rather than help and the Church has to carry the incubus of them in any forward movement. There is serious danger too, for the future of the Church, if there comes any large movement towards Christianity and the Church presents a low standard of life and faith as a model, that will, in spite of her better teaching, be followed.

1. I think the great lack is that we do not get the converts into intimate touch with the word of God. You know the difficulties, not want of Scriptures, but illiteracy, classical difficulties, failure to get past the difficulties of Jewish geography, history etc., superficial reading etc. Nevertheless they must have Bible knowledge if they are to come to know God as he is revealed in the Old and New Testaments. The important point is to get them to know God and to get them into conscious and vital relationship with Him through Jesus Christ. In the Pacific Islands, in Korea and among the Miao the interest in the Scriptures has been stimulated by the desire for education. The Bible has been their main literature, and attention has been focussed on it to their great gain spiritually and religiously, similar reasons account for the influence of the Scriptures on Scottish life and history in early Reformation times. With the Chinese it is not so. They have abundant literature apart from the Scriptures and even when we with missionary intention, teach them to read they are all too soon out of the Bible and into the newspaper.

The position is similar to what it is at home. If you want to get people to read the Bible, it will have to be be-

cause of its religious content, and for the great revelation that it gives of God. It takes knowledge and teaching skill to develop such an interest.

2. We need to remember the status of our converts—babes in Christ. How do we feed our babes? How do we train our own children in Christian knowledge? We tell them Bible stories and allow them from those wonderful illustrations of God's dealing in history and in the lives of men to form their own conception of God and of God in Christ. I think this is what our Chinese converts need at the first, concrete illustrations of God's dealings with men to give them the idea of his justice and goodness and His loving interest in their spiritual welfare. This will correct their heathenish conception of the true God and as they come to know how other men have walked and talked with God, will they not also desire to know Him better?

It was the method of the early Church. Peter preached at Pentecost the wonderful deeds of God. Mark's Gospel, the probable record of the Gospel preached by Peter, simply relates the words and deeds of Jesus, chiefly the deeds. Paul is his preaching to the heathen uses the word "Gospel" in the sense of the proclamation of the deeds of God.

What a contrast to so much of the Chinese preaching! How many sermons by Chinese really give the hearers an increased knowledge of God and His revelation of spiritual things. Here and there one does get a good Spiritual sermon and I think that the influence of missionaries is telling, and an improvement is going on. It is hard for the preachers, for a Scriptural sermon apparently interests our average Christian very little. He would much rather hear the folly of idolatry exposed and his old superstition ridiculed. This is another hindrance to be overcome by line upon line and precept upon precept.

3. As the missionary must deal with the Chinese Christian so much through his assistants, training of preachers, teachers and Biblewomen is most important in relation to the Christian nurture of the Church. They need to be trained to know and love the Scriptures, and to tell them forth in a way that will make them live in the imaginations of the Chinese and captivate them as the Saam Kwok

and other legends have captivated them for ages. It needs not merely class training; it needs individual and heart training as well. The missionary pastor must also make his annual, quarterly, or monthly conferences with his workers a stronger occasion for sending forth through the church fresh impulses of Bible knowledge and devotional enthusiasm. In all things his own example will count greatly. The Chinese will do little more than they see us doing, usually less.

4. We need patience and method in teaching our young converts. There is in the case of the average Christian a time-element necessary for the successive stages of growth in grace. David Hill, remarks, "Cramming too much food into a child is always an unhealthy process; so cramming all the great truths of Christianity into a Chinaman's mind all at once before he has had time to digest one, cannot forward his spiritual life. One truth thoroughly explained.....is better than a cursory glance at all Gospel truth."

5. But Scriptural preaching at the Sunday service is not enough. It must be supplemented by the direct teaching of the Word in Sunday School, Bible Class, Catechumen's Class or whatever organisation is in use for the training of the Christians. I believe myself that it would be quite in accord with the Divine plan in the institution of the Sabbath that a large part of it should be given by converts to Sunday School or better, Bible School, spending the time reading the Scriptures, memorising them, and in studying the truths contained. If the Day of Rest were put to such use it would solve some of the problems about Sabbath keeping and other Church questions. I have tried to introduce such a scheme at one centre but hitherto with little success. If any one has hit on any good plan for interesting the Christians in the Scriptures, I am sure we shall all be glad to hear of it. Some I know have tried a plan of uniform daily Scripture readings, but I don't know what success it has met with.

In Korea they get the Christians to attend a Bible School for ten days or a month. Has any one in this field succeeded in getting the Christians, not merely the helpers, to attend at their own expense in any numbers such a

school? Most missionaries have little good to think of the individual who invented for the Chinese that provoking excuse, *m tak haan*, (i.e. no leisure).

6. Side by side with growth in Scripture knowledge there must be the cultivation of the prayer life and of the devotional life. Knowledge is not enough and yet without sound knowledge of Scripture, we have nothing stable to build upon. They must also be taught to be men and women of the Holy Spirit. Only as the Word is breathed into their souls by the Spirit will it bring them into vital touch with God and become a quickening, energising power for life and service.

The prayer meeting and fellowship meeting help forward. As we have seen, the devotional spirit under heathenism, is practically dormant and needs to be aroused. Even preachers seldom seem to grasp the idea of spiritual worship and the tendency is for them to curtail the devotional part of the Sunday service. This also needs thoughtful attention.

What a vast field for intensive work there is within the Church! I know that these things are laid upon the hearts of many. We need to encourage one another in our efforts and our prayers.

When our small bands of Christians become men of knowledge, and faith, and the power of the Spirit, what great things will God not do for this Empire.

b. HIS CHILDREN

But there is another field in which the nurture of the Church should be exercised, not only as a privilege, but as an imperative duty. Territory won by conquest must be held by the forces of conquest. Only by assiduous care and nurture can the first generation of Christians be built into a strong, vigorous church. But the children of converts give us a free and comparatively untrammelled field for work. The children are free from the bondage of heathenism. Their parents sanction and welcome Christian instruction. Their desire is that their children shall grow up in the faith which they themselves have accepted as the true one. With the parents, there is the handicap of years of subjection to idols; with their children Christianity gets a fair start.

Think of the possibilities of evils avoided, of habits and character formed, of longer and more efficient service in the Kingdom. "To save a man you save a unit, but to save a boy you save a multiplication table." Think what it means, in contrast with the adult, to get the child under continuous instruction and religious training, and without the handicap of a mind pre-occupied by false teaching.

If we could even save the children of professing Christians and win them thoroughly for Christ, a great deal would be done for the ultimate evangelisation of the whole land.

Those who have, of recent years been making a scientific study of the phenomena of childhood and of conversion, point out some striking facts.

1. That the time of greatest sensibility to religious impressions and possibility of conversion lies between the ages of 10 and 20.

2. That analysis of the results of evangelistic missions and efforts, shows that the great proportion of converts is from the ranks of those who have in youth been trained in Sunday Schools or under other religious influences. The Spirit finds a basis of operation and appeal in the truth already acquired.

What bearing have these facts on evangelistic work in China? May not the smallness of results in the past be due to the fact that the preaching has been mostly to adults. The hardness of the soil is due not merely to the deadening influences of heathenism, but to the fact that the hearers have reached an age of small susceptibility to religious impressions.

Then again, in the case of most hearers, there is no basis of Christian knowledge on which to build an appeal, and the facts we give are much at variance with their own religious conceptions.

True, there are young people in every Chinese audience, but we have to remember that filial obedience forbids to the young independent action. What the old frown upon, the young cannot entertain. These facts lend emphasis to the importance of training the children of Christians. I do not know what proportion of the children of Christians in the city are receiving education under Christian influences

but in the country many of these children, if receiving education at all, are receiving it in heathen schools.

Think of the impressionable age of the school boy and remember the materialistic and idolatrous tendency of the influence of the average country school. The probability is that when he comes out of the heathen school, he is hardened and indifferent and our opportunity of winning him is gone.

The Church in China can neglect education of her children only at her peril. Sunday schools are good, and let us foster them for all they are worth, but Sunday schools do not meet all the need. The education of the heathen school is not merely secular, as in government schools at home, it is anti-Christian, and we shall never gain if we give six days to the heathen teacher, and one day to the Church.

We must set a premium on the teaching profession, till we get Christian teachers and able teachers. A recent visitor, Dr. Knox, put forward the interesting suggestion that, in view of the difficulty of getting the church established in the villages, some of our preachers might be employed to greater advantages in teaching school than in itinerant preaching. We have a vast problem to evangelise the villages of South China and to care for the Christians now scattered through them. Where opportunity occurs a preacher might be sent to open school. He would teach the children during the week and conduct service on Sunday. His position would be more influential in the eyes of the Chinese. The preaching office has to contend with its Taoist and Buddhist associations in the minds of the Chinese; the teacher is ex-officio a man of influence in the village.

Again his salary would come mainly, if not entirely, from the fees of the pupils. He could boast with Saint Paul of his independence as a worker. On Sunday he would gather together the neighbouring Christians and others for worship and thus labour as a teacher-pastor. The scheme is not without precedent in Germany, Scotland and elsewhere and is worth the consideration of the Chinese Church and the missionary body. In some places

it might solve the problem of the care of the children of the Christians and the establishment of the Church in the villages.

Given the right man and the scheme is feasible. Last year one of our teachers went into a new village, and maintained a good school throughout the year, receiving from the pupils \$100, in fees. His teaching work has approved itself to the parents and this year the members have increased and he needs an assistant. Through a night school he gathered the young fellows of the village round the school and over a dozen have come forward as candidates to join the church. For part of the time he also conducted service on Sunday. "Given the right man," you say, and we are all looking for him. But are we not more likely to get right men, if we start early to train the children thus given into the hand of the church.

Speaking of the Formosan Church Mr. Moody says, "The ablest and most scholarly of the ministers and preachers are frequently to be found among the Christians of the second generation. Some who made choice of Christianity in their youth, in time to receive a thorough training, exhibit a fine union of piety and learning."

We should train the children not only for their own sake but also for the sake of the future leadership in the Church and state. I am told that the Korean Church confines its educational effort to the children of the Christians and is ambitious to make the Christian community the best educated in the country.

I shall not speak here of the education to be given except that it should be the best possible. In religious education the children should be given that grounding in Scripture knowledge which we would like to give their parents.

The character of the teacher is all important. It will mould the character of the children more than his precepts; and his example will lend force to his teachings or hopelessly discount them.

There is serious work to be done in instructing the parents as to the religious training and education of their children. In many cases they have not realised the importance of the subject or grasped their responsibility as

Christians in regard to their offspring. Often there are serious difficulties, distance, poverty, lack of Christian teachers etc, but if they were convinced as to their duty these could be overcome. They have been overcome by self-sacrifice in other lands, to the lasting benefit of the Church and nation.

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

We turn, thirdly, to that shrine of religious nurture, the Christian Home. It is at once the choicest flower of Christian nurture and one of the most potent influences in moulding the lives of men. Hoary saints and doughty champions of the faith speak of it with tender memories and reverent gratitude.

The Christian home lends itself to a kind of service, which can be as well performed by no other agency. It trains the child at the period when, the most potent influence, is not the spoken word and precept, but the personal influence of the life. That is the most susceptible period of life. The Jesuit says, "Give me the training of the child for its first five years, and I care not who has it afterwards."

The primary forces in the Christian home, are of course, the parental. The influence of the mother is usually in early years supreme. The tenderness, the care, the self-sacrificing affection of the motherly heart, give a conception of love to the young mind, a bias and colouring which it never loses. The Scriptural instances of Hannah, the mother of Samuel, and Eunice, the mother of Timothy are well known illustrations of the power of a godly nature. Our Lord as a child lived within the circle of the Holy Family. Jewish code assigned to the father the responsibility for the earliest religious instruction of the child. To many a man the most powerful religious argument is the memory of a sainted mother, or of an upright, godly father.

In Chinese social life, the unit, as we well know, is not the family, but the household, and in the beginnings of the Church the sanctifying influence of Christian family life is almost entirely unknown as a help to growth and extension. It is a tremendous loss.

The household system binds the Chinese with wooden bands. Often we see a father Christian, the mother

heathen, or the mother Christian but the children still under the domination of the mother-in-law, who is traditionally anything but a Lois.

I believe the Chinese would have a genius for family life, if only the old household system could be broken up, but its hold is tenacious, rooted in custom and poverty, and vested in family property interests from which a man can escape only by resigning his rights.

Another disadvantage of the household system is the lack of parental discipline. I once heard a missionary to the Maoris in New Zealand attribute the main defects in the native character to the fact that the children are regarded as the children of the clan, and they are not under discipline until they are at least 7 years of age. Might not some of the anomalies of the Chinese character, be traced to the same evil in their upbringing.

The idea of "Home" is opening up to the minds of many of the Christian Chinese and here and there one finds the family circle being established. This is especially the case with preachers and teachers whose Mission work has freed them from the household and given the opportunity of making their own home. Chinese family life will in time develop its own characteristics and will have, doubtless, a charm of its own.

We cannot alter the existing social system in China, but we can lay upon the Christians their parental responsibility to train and discipline the children. Despite disadvantages they can do a great deal if they only felt their duty in the matter.

It will be a great day for the Church in China when the Home, with the family circle and family altar becomes the great nursery of Christian character and the stronghold of faith and love.

My feeling as I draw this paper to a close is one of gratitude and of hopefulness; gratitude for the unspeakable blessings of a Christian home and Christian nurture; hopefulness for the Chinese Church, not because it has already attained, but because we see the germs of higher things already present, and assuredly they will grow.

I have also a more sympathetic feeling for the average Chinese Christian. My study of the Chinese heathen gives

me a higher estimate of this brother who has become a Christian. In turning his back on heathenism he has taken a step greater than any taken by the average Christian at home, and if we, as missionaries, have to go back a mile or two to help him along the narrow road surely we can do that cheerfully and sympathetically. So let us be Greathearts to our less privileged brethren.

Finally, I believe that every bit of thorough work done here for the nurture of the Christian life within the Church tells towards the ultimate evangelisation of China. In Australia the farmer sows only one third or one fourth the quantity of seed wheat per acre required in the colder parts of New Zealand. In the more genial climate each grain sends out suckers which multiply stems and thus the seed brings forth a richer harvest. So in China, as the Christian atmosphere warms and spreads, the Word also will send forth and bud and bring forth more abundantly.

W. MAWSON.